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**Testimony for the
Higher Education & Workforce Advancement Committee
From
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Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
March 11, 2011**

On behalf of the member institutions of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC), I am submitting testimony to express concern over one aspect of SB 1011, **AAC A REORGANIZATION OF CONNECTICUT'S SYSTEM OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION**. This bill establishes a Board of Regents for Higher Education that oversees the regulatory functions of today's Department of Higher Education (DHE) along with the Connecticut State University System, the Community College System and Charter Oak State College.

Section 24 of the bill exempts the University of Connecticut from seeking approval from the Board of Regents for new academic programs. The language as drafted is currently unclear as to whether independent colleges would still need to bring programs to this regulatory body for approval but it is our hope that the intent of the bill is to exempt non-profit colleges and universities from the process as well.

Private non-profit colleges and universities in Connecticut strive to provide relevant and sought after majors, degrees and certificate programs that align with the workforce demands of this state. As a result, these institutions currently grant more than half of all degrees awarded in key economic development areas such as Engineering and Related Technology (70%), Computer and Information Science (82%), and Biological Sciences (58%). Exempting independent colleges from seeking approval from the Board of Regents for new academic programs is a critical change that, in these dire economic times, will allow these schools to be even *more* responsive to the needs of employers.

Lawmakers should not be concerned that removing this layer of review will result in inferior programs being offered at our institutions. These programs are fully vetted through various campus processes by accredited higher education institutions and, often, by discipline-specific national organizations. In developing new programs, the independent colleges assess the academic foundations and rigor, institutional fit, available teaching, support and faculty resources and market viability. Only the academically and financially strong programs are ultimately offered.

Albertus Magnus College, Connecticut College, Fairfield University, Goodwin College,
Mitchell College, Quinnipiac University, Rensselaer at Hartford, Sacred Heart University, Saint Joseph College, St. Vincent's College,
Trinity College, University of Bridgeport, University of Hartford, University of New Haven, Wesleyan University, Yale University



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It is important to note that these programs receive no state funding. In addition, it would be particularly inappropriate to exempt one public college sector from the program approval process while *including* private non-profit colleges and to have the private non-profit colleges seek such approval from the governing body of its competitors.

Therefore, we would ask that the bill be modified slightly so that it is clear that both UConn and the non-profit colleges and universities are exempt from seeking approval from the Board of Regents for new academic programs.

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